

VZCZCXRO7050
RR RUEHRN RUEHROV
DE RUEHKM #1579/01 3451429
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 101429Z DEC 08
FM AMEMBASSY KAMPALA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0965
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KAMPALA 001579

SIPDIS

///C O R R E C T E D C O P Y/// (ADDING "CLASSIFIED BY" AND "REASON"
LINE ONLY)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/09/17
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UG](#) [SU](#) [CG](#)
SUBJECT: NORTHERN UGANDA: KONY LIVING IN A FOOL'S PARADISE

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Classified by: P/E Chief, Kathleen FitzGibbon for reasons 1.4(b)
and (d).

REF: A. KAMPALA 1552
[1](#)B. KAMPALA 1561

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Government of Uganda (GOU) lead negotiator Ruhukana Rugunda described Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leader Joseph Kony as "living in a fool's paradise" after hearing the details of Kony's meeting with a delegation of northern elders on November 29. The meeting was the first time Kony had spoken his mind to any such group since September 2007. Accounts of the encounter reveal that Kony and his senior officers are living in a reality shaped by isolation and misinformation about the outside world. Kony cannot understand why no one is listening to him and why he is not benefiting from the peace process. In the wake of Kony's refusal to sign the Final Peace Agreement (FPA), Government of Southern Sudan Mediator Riek Machar and LRA delegation leader David Matsanga traveled to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda in a probably vain attempt to salvage dialogue in the face of Kony's intransigence. End Summary.

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VISIT WITH THE CHAIRMAN
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[1](#)2. (U) The LRA delegation, northern elders, religious leaders, and parliamentarians traveled to Rikwangba on November 28 to meet with LRA leader Joseph Kony (refs A and B). This was billed as the last attempt to persuade Kony to sign the FPA. A signing ceremony was planned for November [1](#)30. The group moved approximately five kilometers outside the assembly area to a temporary LRA encampment, where they spent two nights sleeping outside next to a campfire. Kony stopped by to acknowledge their presence on the evening of November 28 and returned on November 29 to meet with them from 1300 to 1800. The group went through three security checkpoints where they were rigorously searched and subjected to rough treatment. Michael Otim, Director of the NGO Forum in Gulu, said that in the past, there had not been any security checks. The planned discussion about the FPA turned out to be a one-sided diatribe by Kony with difficult, sometimes heated, follow-up meetings with senior LRA officers (ref A).

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UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS
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[1](#)3. (SBU) Kony told the group that he did not trust his previous negotiators and that he wanted to reconstitute the team in order to conclude negotiations before Christmas. In

one instance, Kony railed against Martin Ojul, Matsanga's predecessor, and said that he could not accept the Protocol on Accountability and Reconciliation, which is the heart of the FPA and which had been negotiated by Ojul. He stated that he could not accept an agreement negotiated by "thieves" who stole donor money and were being paid by the GOU. Kony said that he needs to reconstitute his negotiating team to get rid of the thieves. He re-affirmed support for Matsanga as the delegation leader and said that delegation member Justine Labeja is the only person he trusts.

¶4. (SBU) Kony claimed that UN Special Envoy for LRA-Affected Areas Joachim Chissano promised that the GOU would go to the UNSC to request the deferment of the ICC warrants after the Accountability and Reconciliation Protocol was signed on June 27, 2007. Kony complained that the GOU had not gone to the UNSC and that this was a sign of bad faith. (Note: Kony is misinformed on the timing of the approach to the UNSC. Chissano's team did not tell Kony that the GOU would go to the UNSC after signing the protocol. Chissano insisted that Kony sign the FPA before going to the UNSC. End Note.)

¶5. (C) After complaining that the GOU had paid off his negotiators, Kony demanded to know where "his money" from Museveni was. Kony said on one occasion that he was supposed to receive \$10,000 from the GOU, but it was blocked by GOSS mediator Riek Machar. (Note: GOU officials confirm that Museveni sent Kony the \$10,000 that was diverted by the mediation team. End Note.) Kony said that Museveni needs to give him money to prove the GOU's seriousness toward the process.

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FACING INTERNAL DISSENT
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¶6. (C) Otim confirmed previous reporting about pressure on Kony from other senior LRA officers (ref A). In a private meeting with the Acholi Paramount Chief, Rwot Acana, Kony said that "I have internal problems. Some people in the group need to feel part of the process. If something comes

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through from the Government of Uganda, there has to be something in it for them." Otim reports a similar, more vicious encounter with BG Dominic Ongwen, who frightened the group of elders into thinking they were about to be executed. Ongwen said that if Kony signs the FPA as it is, without clearly defined packages and positions outlining the future of the senior LRA commander, they would kill him. Ongwen reportedly was reprimanded later in a LRA High Command meeting and said nothing the following day.

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BETRAYAL BY THE ACHOLI
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¶7. (C) Kony lashed out at a number of Acholi leaders and acted disrespectfully to the traditional leader of his own clan. He complained that Gulu District Chairman Norbert Mao should stop public comments alleging that the LRA received ammunition from Khartoum in an airdrop. He challenged Mao to produce the evidence. Kony then asked "what is wrong with the LRA receiving help from the Arabs when the UPDF is getting assistance from the Americans?" Kony stated that Mao should have come to see firsthand the effectiveness of Khartoum weaponry. Otim said that the group interpreted this as a confirmation of a continued lifeline from Khartoum. He and other members of the group noted the new Sudanese uniforms and other "gadgets" and military trappings in the camp.

¶8. (C) Kony's uncle, Thomas Otim, handed over seven

suitcases to the LRA. Michael Otim said that Kony's uncle was allegedly carrying equipment that could detect aircraft at night.

¶9. (SBU) Kony only had kind words for Ugandan President Museveni, who has been taking care of his mother for 15 years. He said that he wanted to talk to Museveni directly and tasked Matsanga to get the latest telephone numbers from the Government.

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MACHAR AND MATSANGA PLEAD KONY'S CASE IN THE REGION
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¶10. (SBU) After the GOU put an end to its participation in the Juba Peace Process on DATE, Machar wrote a letter to Presidents Kabila and Museveni urging a continuation of peace talks. Machar, Matsanga, and the LRA delegation traveled to Kinshasa on December 4 and Kampala from December 5 to 8 to brief Presidents Kabila and Museveni on their ideas for the future of the peace process. Upon arrival at the airport, Machar and Matsanga told P/E Chief that Kabila had been receptive to their message, which was to keep an open line of dialogue with Kony, albeit in a scaled down manner. Machar's basic point was that it was less expensive to maintain dialogue than to pursue a military option which could re-ignite LRA attacks on civilian populations.

¶11. (SBU) Matsanga said he told Kabila that it was clear that the GOU would not go to the UNSC without Kony's signature on the FPA. Matsanga argued that Kony's signature was not important, but implementation of the agreement was critical. Machar also told Kabila that because Congolese citizens are now LRA victims, the DRC could make the request to the UNSC for the ICC warrants to be deferred. Matsanga claimed to have lined up British support for this move. Kabila was non-committal about going to the UNSC, according to Matsanga.

¶12. (C) Matsanga told P/E Chief that he would bring his satellite telephone to Museveni so that Kony could call the President. During Machar and Matsanga's December 8 meeting, Museveni said that he would be willing to have direct contact with Kony. (Note: The call did not happen in the meeting, but Matsanga later told P/E Chief that he has a private number to arrange for Kony to use. Museveni has been waiting for Kony to call him since December 2006, when he first gave the LRA his numbers. Museveni did have a brief conversation with then LRA Deputy Vincent Otti. End Note.) Matsanga described the meeting with Museveni as "fantastical" (meaning positive) and said that Museveni agreed not to attack Kony. Machar and Matsanga requested that Museveni sign the peace agreement unilaterally. Museveni remained non-committal and said he would think about it, according to Minister of Internal Affairs Ruhukana Rugunda, who was in the meeting. Museveni only agreed to talk to Kony directly should he call. The Government position, according to Rugunda, is that no funding or food be provided to the LRA until Kony fulfills his commitment to assembly at Rikwangba, southern Sudan.

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COMMENT

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¶13. (C) Machar and Matsanga may have heard what they wanted to hear and come away from the regional meetings with the belief that there is support for continued peace talks. They essentially presented options to Kabila and Museveni that do not change the negative dynamic of the peace process. Machar and Matsanga may genuinely believe that the costs of continuing dialogue in some form are lower than pursuing a

military option. Most observers question the quality of any dialogue with Kony after his shoddy treatment of the Acholi elders and parliamentarians and his insistence that the ICC warrants be lifted, which is contingent upon him signing the FPA.

BROWNING